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EXAMINER

MILEF, ELDA G

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

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### **BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES**

Application Number: 09/819,462  
Filing Date: March 28, 2001  
Appellant(s): BAUMANN ET AL.

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Jack P. Friedman  
For Appellant

**EXAMINER'S ANSWER**

3This is in response to the appeal brief filed 6/22/2009 appealing from the Office action mailed 1/21/2009.

**(1) Real Party in Interest**

A statement identifying by name the real party in interest is contained in the brief.

**(2) Related Appeals and Interferences**

The examiner is not aware of any related appeals, interferences, or judicial proceedings which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

**(3) Status of Claims**

The statement of the status of claims contained in the brief is correct.

**(4) Status of Amendments After Final**

The appellant's statement of the status of amendments after final rejection contained in the brief is correct.

**(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter**

The summary of claimed subject matter contained in the brief is correct.

**(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal**

The appellant's statement of the grounds of rejection to be reviewed on appeal is correct.

**(7) Claims Appendix**

The copy of the appealed claims contained in the Appendix to the brief is correct.

**(8) Evidence Relied Upon**

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6,882,983

Furphy et al.

4-2005

"University of New Hampshire Financial and Administrative Procedures"

([http://www.finadmin.unh.edu/pol\\_proc/chapter\\_23/pro23\\_051.html](http://www.finadmin.unh.edu/pol_proc/chapter_23/pro23_051.html); Issued by Computing and Information Services; Issued Date: 01/01/94; retrieved date 9/11/06).

Gershenfeld, Nancy. "Client-server: What Is It and Are We There Yet?" Online.

Medford: Mar. 1995. Vol. 19, Iss. 2; pg. 60.

### **(9) Grounds of Rejection**

The following ground(s) of rejection are applicable to the appealed claims:

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

1. Claims 1, 20, 21, 23-28, 30-33, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,507,826 Maners in view of *University of New Hampshire Financial and Administrative Procedures*,

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([http://www.finadmin.unh.edu/pol\\_proc/chapter\\_23/pro23\\_051.html](http://www.finadmin.unh.edu/pol_proc/chapter_23/pro23_051.html); Issued by Computing and Information Services; Issued Date:01/01/94; retrieved date 9/11/06) hereinafter, Procedures in further view of Furphy et al. (hereinafter Furphy, US Patent No.6,882,983).

**Re Claim 1:** Maners discloses the invention substantially as claimed including in a method for approving and paying an invoice for commodities (Abstract), the steps of:

receiving, by a front end server from a requestor, a purchase request for goods (Col. 2 Lines 6-26), said goods having a designation denoting that the goods are receivable which requires a positive confirmation from the requestor to provide authorization to pay for the goods, said designation being stored in the front end server (Col. 5, lines 40-50; Col. 6 lines 48-67 (dependent invoices can be marked as “incomplete”, refused, or “operational hold”, Fig. 4); an invoice processing system comprising the front end server, an application server and a back end server, said back end server coupled to the front end server via the application server, said front end server comprising a positive confirmation application and a database, said application server comprising a positive confirmation bridge. Maners discloses marking said commodity as “posted” status which indicates that the invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI server and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable system for payment processing. –see Fig. 4 and col. 6 lines 48-67;

sending, by the front end server to the back end server, a requisition comprising requirements relating to the received purchase request and including the designation; generating, by the back end server in response to receiving the requisition sent by the

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front end server, said purchase order based on the requisition. In fig. 2, Maners disclose network server 212, an application server Micro EDI and an SQL Server (included in the micro EDI database 214). The application server can process invoices between a vendor and a client's accounting system. see Fig. 2 and related text and cols. 4-8;

said back end server transmitting or delivering the purchase order to a vendor that can provide the requested goods; ("This purchase order information is considered part of the reference data 218 that is exchanged between the company accounting computer system 206 and the Micro EDI database 214 via the local area network 204) col. 7, lines 25-29;

after said transmitting or delivering the purchase order to the vendor, said application server receiving an invoice from the vendor, said invoice referencing the purchase order and requesting payment for the goods; after said application server receiving the invoice from the vendor, said positive confirmation bridge marking the invoice to indicate that said positive confirmation is required; Col. 5, lines 40-50; Col. 6 lines 48-67 (dependent invoices can be marked as "incomplete", refused, or "operational hold", Fig. 4);

after said positive confirmation bridge marking the invoice, said back end server receiving the invoice from the application server; Maners discloses marking said commodity as "posted" status which indicates that the invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI server and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable system for payment processing. –see Fig. 4 and col. 6 lines 48-67;

responsive to said back end server receiving the invoice from the positive

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confirmation bridge, said back end server communicating transaction information pertaining to the invoice to the front end server; Maners teaches an invoice processing system including an invoice processing server providing a payment authorization signal to an accounting computer system to initiate processing payment of the invoice in response to determining the invoice is authorized for payment.-see Abstract and col. 9 lines 23-44.

after said communicating transaction information, said positive confirmation application providing notice to the requestor that the invoice has been received and that the invoice includes the required positive confirmation; Maners teaches an invoice processing system including an invoice processing server providing a payment authorization signal to an accounting computer system to initiate processing payment of the invoice in response to determining the invoice is authorized for payment.-see Abstract and col. 9 lines 23-44.

after said providing notice to the requestor, said front end server receiving a response from the requestor for authorizing or rejecting payment for the goods. Maners disclose that the notification to the vendor is via the website –see Fig. 4 “The vendor, via the vendor computer system 210, can select to view details of any one of the invoices displayed on the grid, add or change information in any of the incomplete invoices shown on the grid, or add a new invoice to its grid of invoices. When an invoice is in "posted" status, the invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI Server 202 and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable computer system 206 for payment processing. When an invoice is in "incomplete" status, the

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invoice still needs information from the vendor to be ready for validation and posting into the company accounts payable computer system 206. An invoice that has been assigned a "refused" status has been rejected for payment. And an invoice that is assigned "operational hold" status is being held from validation and posting until certain information and/or authorization can be obtained by the MicroEDI Server 202.

Typically, an "operational hold" status for an invoice requires additional information or authorization to be entered into the MicroEDI Server

202 by company personnel.-col. 6 lines 48-67;

Maners does not specifically disclose if the received response is for authorizing payment, then creating an automated receipt transaction file including a goods receipt and entering said transaction file into an enterprise resource planning system for payment. Procedures discloses these limitations on pages 1-11, particularly page 1, underlined text and lines 3-5 wherein Procedures discloses ("Special conditions...are also captured on the receipt."), also refer to pages 3, 5, 8, and 10. Procedures discloses a three way match system including matching information disclosed on a purchase order, invoice, and received goods, and the generating of a receipt. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Maners to include the three way matching disclosed by Procedures because this would have assured that goods ordered were indeed delivered per purchase order and approved by recipient.

Although Maners discloses "The Micro EDI Database 214 normally stores invoice



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data 216 and other related reference data 218. The MicroEDI Server 202 can receive/transmit invoice data 216 and other related reference data 218 with the company's computer system 206 handling the accounting functions for the company...can receive/transmit certain invoice data from/to the computer system 210 at the vendor site." (col. 5 lines 4-21) as well as the use of Internet and Intranet(col. 3 line 41 to col. 5 line 22) , Maners does not explicitly disclose responsive to a response entered by said requestor rejecting payment, creating an e-mail notification to accounts payable for returning said invoice to said vendor. Furphy however, teaches a communication interface and notification of buying company or selling company in resolving discrepancies between the invoice and purchase order data. col. 4 lines 18-35. and E-mail notification –see Fig. 8 and related text; col. 15 lines 49-65. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the invoice processing system of Maners and the three way match system of Procedures the ability to send an e-mail notification to accounts payable as taught by Furphy since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

**Re claims 20, 21, 23:** Maners discloses after said front end server receiving the response, said server recoding the response in the database; wherein received response is for authorizing payment for the goods; wherein the received response is for rejecting payment for the goods. "invoice information received from a vendor computer

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system is validated in real-time before acceptance for posting in the company's accounting computer system.-see col. 5 lines 47-49, "An invoice that has been assigned a "refused" status has been rejected for payment." –see col. 6, lines 59-60.

**Re claim 24:** Maners discloses providing notice to the requestor to a location where positive confirmation can be performed. "And an invoice that is assigned an 'operational hold' status is being held for validation and posting until certain information and/or authorization can be obtained by the Micro EDI server202. Typically, an operational hold' status for an invoice requires additional information or authorization be entered into the MicroEDI Server 202 by company personnel." Col. 6 lines 60-67; and notification of authorization agent in col. 9, also col. 11 claims 5,8.

**Re claims 25, 26:** Maners do not specifically disclose wherein the application server further comprises a confirmation interface to the database, Furphy however teaches a communication interface provided to both the buying and selling companies to resolve discrepancies between the purchase order data and the invoice data. Col. 4 lines 32-35; col. 5 lines 20-28; col. 8 lines 33-41 response via interface. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the invoice validation system of Maners the ability to validate an invoice via an interface as taught by Furphy since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

**Claim 27** has similar limitations found in claims 1 and 20 in combination, and therefore is rejected by the same art and rationale.

**Claims 28, 30-33** have similar limitations found in claims 21, 23-26 respectively, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

2. Claims 22 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maners, Procedures, and Furphy as applied to claim 21 above, and further in view of Gershenfeld, (Gershenfeld, Nancy. "Client-server: What Is It and Are We There Yet?" Online. Medford: Mar. 1995. Vol. 19, Iss. 2; pg. 60, 5 pages).

**Re claim 22:** Maners discloses "When an invoice is in "posted" status, the invoice has been processed by the Micro EDI server 220 and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable computer system 206 for payment processing." Col. 6 lines 52-55; Fig. 4. Maners, Procedures, and Furphy do not specifically disclose notifying a back end server via a requisition bridge. It is old and well known in the computer networking art that servers, LANS, and networks are connected using bridges, also commonly known as routers or gateways as evidenced by Gershenfeld p. 2 para. 6 ("LANs now connect many servers...A series of LANs can be strung together with bridges...") It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the invoice and transaction processing methods and systems of Maners, Procedures, and Furphy the ability to connect LANS via a bridge as taught by Gershenfeld since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function

as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

**Claim 29** has similar limitations found in claim 22, and therefore is rejected by the same art and rationale.

### **(10) Response to Argument**

In response to the appellant's argument that Maners does not disclose three servers. Maners discloses receiving by a front end server from a requestor (company 206) a purchase request for goods (company accounting system 206 [front end server], sending a request for goods via the MicroEDI server 202 to one of its vendors[back end server] 210 . Maners further discloses that the MicroEDI Server 202 can be networkly coupled via either the Internet or a company's Intranet 222 with another computer system 224, 206, for determining authorization of certain invoices for payment using a network server. col. 5 lines 1-22 Therefore, it is obvious from the teachings of Maners that communications from the MicroEDI server to either the company's computer system or vendor's computer system using the Internet is done via network servers. Maners discloses an application server (Micro EDI Server-fig. 2 item 202) that processes invoices between a vendor and a client company's accounting system (fig. 2 item 216 and client company's accounting system item 206.) With reference to Figure 2 and related text, Maners discloses that the application server can process invoices between vendor and a client's accounting system and the purchase order information is considered part of the reference data (218, fig. 2) that is exchanged between the company accounting computer system 206 and the Micro EDI database.

Regarding the argument that Maners does not disclose generating a purchase request and who the requestor is, the appellant's attention is directed to Col. 2 lines 6-67 wherein Maners disclose a typical transaction involves a company 1 creating a purchase order, and transmitting the purchase order in EDI format to the vendor company 2. The invention disclosed by Maners seeks to more efficiently perform the task of entering processing and validating such purchase orders. Furthermore, Maners discloses "The first type of invoice is based on orders issued out of a company's purchasing computer system which typically is part of the company's accounting computer system 206."—see col. 5 lines 44-47

In response to the argument that Maners does not disclose the feature, "said goods having a designation denoting that the goods are receivable which requires a positive confirmation from the requestor to provide authorization to pay for the goods, said designation being stored in the front end server," Maners discloses "When an invoice is in 'posted status', the invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI server<sup>202</sup> and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable computer system 206 for payment processing." Col. 6 lines 52-55. The purchase order information is considered part of the reference data 218 that is exchanged between the company accounting computer system 206 and the MicroEDI database 214. col. 7 lines 25-28.

In response to the argument that Maners in view of Procedure in view of Furphy do not disclose "said application server comprising a positive confirmation bridge; said positive confirmation bridge marking the invoice to indicate that said positive confirmation is required," Maners discloses "When an invoice is in 'posted status', the

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invoice has been processed by the MicroEDI server 202 and determined valid and submitted to the company accounts payable computer system 206 for payment processing.” Col. 6 lines 52-55; Maners further discloses that the MicroEDI Server 202 can be networkly coupled via either the Internet or a company’s Intranet 222 with another computer system 224 for determining authorization of certain invoices for payment using a network server .col. 5 lines 1-22. Maners discloses various designations of invoice dependent on the status of processing, i.e., posted, incomplete, open hold, refused, ready fax in Fig. 4 and col. 6 lines 48-67.

Regarding the arguments that Maners fails to disclose “said front end server receiving a response from the requestor for authorizing or rejecting payment for the goods” and “said front end server recording response in a database.” Maners disclose requesting authorization from the company to process orphan invoices, and posting the orphan invoices to the company’s account system col. 8 line 50 to col. 9 line 66. It is obvious that in order to “post” an authorized invoice for payment to an accounting system, a database is present to capture the data.

In response to the argument that Maners in view of Procedures, in further view of Furphy do not disclose “wherein the received response is for authorizing payment for the goods”, Maners disclose requesting authorization from the company to process orphan invoices, and posting the orphan invoices to the company’s account system col. 8 line 50 to col. 9 line 66.

Regarding the suggestion that Maners does not disclose wherein the notice directs the requestor to a location where the positive confirmation can be performed.

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Maners discloses seeking an authorizing agent within the company who will provide a payment authorization signal. Col. 9 lines 1-65.

In response to the argument that Maners, Procedures, and Furphy do not disclose “wherein the application server further comprises a confirmation interface to the database”, Furphy teach a communication interface utilized by the buying company and selling company for resolving discrepancies between the purchase order data and the invoice data, and the interface facilitating communication between parties, providing payments, and managing data including keeping records of transactions. Col. 4 lines 32-35; col. 5 lines 20-28.

**(11) Related Proceeding(s) Appendix**

No decision rendered by a court or the Board is identified by the examiner in the Related Appeals and Interferences section of this examiner’s answer.

For the above reasons, it is believed that the rejections should be sustained.

Respectfully submitted,

/Elda Milef/  
Examiner, Art Unit 3692

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